Listing of Claims:

1.   (Original) A method for effecting at least one payment for a user of an electronic auction web site maintained by an electronic auction system, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving authorization by a payment system from the user of the electronic auction web site to loan funds thereto for effecting the at least one payment; and

loaning funds by the payment system for effecting the at least one payment, wherein the payment system is in operative communication with the electronic auction system.

2.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of charging the user of the electronic auction web site interest for the funds loaned.

3.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the following steps prior to the step of loaning funds:

receiving authorization from the user to use a payment source corresponding to the user for effecting the at least one payment and to loan funds to the user if the payment source has insufficient funds;

determining if the payment source corresponding to the user has sufficient funds for effecting the at least one payment; and

determining to loan funds if the payment source corresponding to the user has insufficient funds for effecting the at least one payment.

4.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of loaning funds occurs automatically or is initiated by the user of the electronic auction web site.

5.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

determining whether the user of the electronic auction web site owes funds greater than a predetermined amount to an operator associated with the payment system; and

preventing the user from performing at least one action via the electronic auction web site, if the user owes funds greater than the predetermined amount to the operator associated with the payment system.

6.   (Original) The method according to Claim 5, wherein the step of determining comprises the step of determining whether the user has paid a predetermined percentage of the funds owed during a predetermined period of time, if it is determined that the user owes funds greater than the predetermined amount to the operator.

7.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step of receiving funds to be loaned to the user of the electronic auction web site from a financial institution.

8.   (Original) The method according to Claim 7, wherein the funds to be loaned are received from the financial institution by the payment system, and wherein the

payment system charges the user of the electronic auction web site a fee for receiving funds from the financial institution.

9.   (Original) The method according to Claim 8, wherein the payment system charges a fee to the financial institution for loaning funds received from the financial institution to the user of the electronic auction web site.

10.   (Original) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the fee is based on interest earned by the financial institution for the funds loaned to the user of the electronic auction web site.

11.   (Original) The method according to Claim 8, wherein the financial institution is owned and/or operated by an operator of the payment system.

12.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of loaning funds for effecting the at least one payment comprises the step of transferring the funds loaned to at least one account.

13.   (Original) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the at least one account includes an account corresponding to an operator of the electronic auction system and at least one account corresponding to another user of the electronic auction web site.

14.   (Original) A method for effecting at least one payment for a user of an electronic auction web site, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving authorization from the user to use a payment source corresponding to the user for effecting the at least one payment and to loan funds to the user if the payment source has insufficient funds;

determining if the payment source corresponding to the user has sufficient funds for effecting the at least one payment; and

loaning funds for effecting the at least one payment if the payment source corresponding to the user has insufficient funds for effecting the at least one payment.

15.   (Original) The method according to Claim 14, further comprising the step of charging the user of the electronic auction web site interest for the funds loaned.

16.   (Original) The method according to Claim 14, further comprising the step of receiving funds to be loaned to the user of the electronic auction web site from a financial institution.

17.   (Original) The method according to Claim 16, further comprising the step of charging the user a fee for receiving funds from the financial institution.

18.   (Original) The method according to Claim 16, further comprising the step of charging a fee to the financial institution for loaning funds received from the financial institution to the user of the electronic auction web site.

19.   (Original) A payment system for effecting at least one payment for a user of an electronic auction web site maintained by an electronic auction system, said system comprising:

means for receiving authorization by the payment system from the user of the electronic auction web site to loan funds thereto for effecting the at least one payment; and

means for loaning funds by the payment system for effecting the at least one payment, wherein the payment system is in operative communication with the electronic auction system.

20.   (Original) The payment system according to Claim 19, wherein the means for loaning funds is activated automatically or is initiated by the user of the electronic auction web site.

21.   (Original) The payment system according to Claim 19, further comprising:

means for determining whether the user of the electronic auction web site owes funds greater than a predetermined amount to an operator associated with the payment system; and

means for preventing the user from performing at least one action via the electronic auction web site, if the user owes funds greater than the predetermined amount to the operator associated with the payment system.

22.   (Original) The payment system according to Claim 19, further comprising means for charging the user of the electronic auction web site interest for the funds loaned.

23.   (Original) The payment system according to Claim 19, further comprising means for receiving funds to be loaned to the user from a financial institution.

24.   (Original) The payment system according to Claim 23, further comprising means for charging a fee to the financial institution for loaning funds received from the financial institution to the user of the electronic auction web site.

25.   (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of receiving authorization entails receiving authorization prior to the beginning of an electronic auction conducted by the electronic auction system, during the electronic auction, or after the conclusion of the electronic auction.

26.   (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of loaning funds comprises the steps of:

accessing a system account stored within a database of the payment system; and

deducting funds from the system account for loaning to the user.

27.   (Previously Presented) A method for effecting at least one payment for a user of an electronic auction web site maintained by an electronic auction system, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving authorization from the user of the electronic auction web site to loan funds thereto for effecting the at least one payment; and

loaning funds by at least one of a payment system of the electronic auction system and an external financial system for effecting the at least one payment, wherein the payment system and the external financial system are in operative communication with the electronic auction system.

Claims 28-48   (Cancelled)

49.   (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 38, further comprising the step of performing at least one action to effect payment by the user of the electronic commerce web site of at least a portion of the funds which do not belong to the user and transferred to the at least one account.

50.   (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the method does not entail receiving instructions from another user of the electronic auction web site regarding whether to loan funds by the payment system for effecting the at least one payment.

51.   (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the method does not provide for any interaction between the user and another user of the electronic auction web site.

52.   (Previously Presented) The payment system according to Claim 19, wherein the payment system does not receive instructions from another user of the electronic auction web site regarding whether to loan funds for effecting the at least one payment.

53.   (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 27, wherein the method does not entail receiving instructions from another user of the electronic auction web site regarding whether to loan funds by the at least one of the payment system and the external financial system for effecting the at least one payment.

54.   (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 27, wherein the method does not provide for any interaction between the user and another user of the electronic auction web site.

Claims 55-56   (Cancelled)

57.   (New) A method for effecting payment for a purchaser of at least one item offered for an electronic auction sale by a seller via an electronic auction web site maintained by at least one computing device of an electronic auction system, said method comprising the steps of:

maintaining a database of a plurality of electronic auction payment accounts corresponding to a plurality of users, including the purchaser, of said electronic auction web site and a payment segment of said electronic auction web site by an electronic auction payment system integrated with said electronic auction system, each of said plurality of

electronic auction payment accounts configured for storing funds therein and each capable

of being used for user transactions in the electronic auction system;

performing at least one payment-related activity by said electronic auction payment

system for effecting payment for said purchaser, said at least one payment-related activity

selected from the group consisting of debiting an electronic auction payment account

corresponding to the purchaser of the at least one item and maintained by said electronic

auction payment system, and withdrawing funds from at least one account storing funds

therein and not corresponding to at least one of the plurality of users; and

crediting at least one account corresponding to the seller to effect payment for the at

least one item offered for the electronic auction sale via the electronic auction web site;

wherein the step of withdrawing funds from the at least one account storing funds

therein and not corresponding to the at least one of the plurality of users comprises:

receiving authorization by the electronic auction payment system from the

purchaser to loan funds thereto for effecting the at least one payment; and

loaning funds by the electronic auction payment system for effecting the at least one

payment.

58.   (New) A payment system for effecting payment to a seller of at least one

item offered for an electronic auction sale via an electronic auction web site and won by a

winning bidder at the conclusion of the electronic auction sale, said electronic auction web

site being maintained by an electronic auction system, said payment system comprising:

a database containing a plurality of electronic auction payment accounts, where the

plurality of electronic auction payment accounts are configured for storing funds therein,

and where one of the plurality of electronic auction payment accounts corresponds to the winning bidder of the at least one item and one of the plurality of electronic auction payment accounts corresponds to the seller; and

a computing device including application software for maintaining the plurality of electronic auction payment accounts and for automatically effecting payment to the seller by accessing the database and debiting the electronic auction payment account corresponding to the winning bidder of the at least one item and crediting at least one account corresponding to the seller without any intervention by the winning bidder following the conclusion of the electronic auction, wherein said payment system maintains the database containing the plurality of electronic auction payment accounts and a payment segment of the electronic auction web site, wherein said computing device further loans funds to the winning bidder if the computing device determines there are insufficient funds in the electronic auction payment account corresponding to the winning bidder.